Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Christopher A. Hoang
Title: NATO Enlargement in the Western Balkans: Bosnia and Herzegovina
Programme/year: MISS, 2018/2019
Author of Evaluation (external assessor): Hana Oberpfalzerová

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research question,</td>
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<td>definition of objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical/conceptual framework</td>
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Evaluation

Major criteria:

This assessment has been elaborated based on the officially uploaded version, not the “Errata” one.

The thesis presents a solid study of the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the NATO. Its strongest point is that it manages to cover the whole complexity of the issue, the actors, interests, agendas, conflict-related factors, etc. It is based on a broad
range of literature to support this complexity and by raising the right issues, the
author has demonstrated that he understands the topic in-depth.

The research questions (p. 10) are aiming at the right issues, but only implicitly as
their wording is too broad and too unclear: what integration process?, what area of
BiH development? Their points, as the author intended them, are sufficiently
described in the analysis. However, the conclusion is too brief and too little explicit in
addressing the answers to all of these questions one by one or altogether more
clearly in a way that would be appropriate for a conclusion of such an extensive
thesis. Also, the coherence of the research questions could be improved and the way
they complement each other could have been made clearer.

The analysis deals with the right issues (Russia's involvement, the anti-NATO
sentiments of the Serbs, Europeanization, the Dayton system, etc.). It does describe
quite well what the policies were, but it sometimes does not go far enough as to
evaluate their success and effectiveness, and to what degree they were implemented
and achieved.

Content-wise, my main problem with the thesis is that the main research question is
causal, while the thesis is mainly descriptive, not always citing sources that would
prove the causal relationships between the process of integration into NATO and
changes in BiH policy dynamics the author promised to prove. At least, I am missing
this on the level of causal claims based on research-based sources supported by
citations. The thesis is often staying more on the level of correlation, although it
touches on the right issues. This is exacerbated by the unclarity of the research
questions.

The theoretical framework is applied, but the connection could have been pointing
out more explicitly, especially in the conclusion. However, any trace of methodology,
let alone operationalization, is completely missing. It is unclear how it will go about
answering the research questions and drawing the conclusions, and it is somewhat
questionable to which extent the comparison with neighboring Western Balkan
countries was more useful in answering the research question than a deeper analysis
of the situation in Bosnia.

Minor criteria:

By "Sources" I mean the quality sources on the reference list and their use in
supporting the argumentation. The quality of those sources is very high, they are
mostly academic books and articles, reports by international organizations or
governments, or quality news sources and analyses. However, I subtract points on
this criterium because I believe that the sources should have had supported many
more claims: there are some passages that the author assumes are common
knowledge or they are his inferences that should have been supported with sources
(at least to support the credibility of those claims).
A literature review is missing. The author limits himself to saying in a paragraph in the introduction that “there is/is not enough academic literature about...”.

The writing style is good.

I penalize the author on the formal criteria, mainly for the lack of proper referencing in numerous passages. As mentioned earlier, in the version I assessed, many passages throughout the thesis are left uncited, while they clearly are not common knowledge, nor can they be the author’s own inferences. I am leaving this up to the commission to decide. Also, the author fails to cite a single page number in the thesis: all references are in the form (author, year) only, in combination with a few in-text citations in the form of footnotes, thus combining two citation styles (p. 17). The citation style on the reference list seems more or less complete and coherent.

Overall evaluation:

The student has proven that he has understood how to write a Master’s thesis and he has demonstrated that he has the ability to find and integrate sources and apply a theory in order to answer very complex research questions in a setting of intractable ethnic conflict. Despite the weak points, this thesis does fulfill the criteria for a Master’s degree. I suggest therefore to grade the thesis with a weaker grade “C”.

Suggested grade:

C

Signature: